



## **2001 REGIONAL BICYCLE PLAN FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA**

DECEMBER 2001

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Prepared by:  
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The Metropolitan Transportation Commission's *2001 Regional Bicycle Plan* is a component of the *2001 Regional Transportation Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area*, which establishes the region's 25-year transportation investment plan. The *Regional Bicycle Plan* represents the efforts of MTC staff, the Regional Bicycle Plan Oversight Committee, local agencies, advocacy groups, and countless dedicated citizens in the Bay Area. MTC sought to develop a regional bicycle plan with five main objectives:

- To define a network of regionally significant bicycle routes, facilities, and necessary support programs and facilities;
- Identify gaps in the network and recommend specific improvements needed to fill these gaps in the system;
- Develop cost estimates for build-out of the entire regional network;
- Develop a funding strategy to implement the regional bike network; and
- Identify programs to help local jurisdictions to become more bicycle-friendly.

The network itself is over 1,600 miles in length, which includes all 400 miles of the Bay Trail, the multiuse pathway that will ultimately ring San Francisco Bay. The creation of the Regional Bicycle Network will provide better access to the region's transit network and activity centers, as well as encourage greater use of the bicycle as a transportation mode. Greater use of the bicycle has some obvious benefits to the region in terms of congestion reduction and improved air quality. There also are some equally important benefits in terms of health and overall quality of life improvements associated with a robust system of bicycling facilities.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

To develop the Regional Bicycle Plan, MTC convened an oversight committee that included staff from congestion management agencies, cities, East Bay Regional Park District, transit agencies, Caltrans, the Association of Bay Area

Governments (ABAG), the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and local bicycle advocacy groups. This partnership approach ensured that representatives from a variety of stakeholder groups with different areas of expertise could provide input and guidance on the development of the plan. The Oversight Committee provided valuable direction and guidance to the overall plan effort. Two series of public outreach meetings were held throughout the region. MTC also ensured that every county bicycle advisory committee (BAC) was consulted on the development of the plan. Finally, the Bay Area Partnership participated in the Oversight Committee and regular briefings were provided to the Partnership Planning and Operations Committee.

Some issues were raised repeatedly at public workshops, at BAC meetings, and by Oversight Committee members. Of primary concern were the lack of continuous facilities, accommodation for cyclists on the region's roadways, and the lack of provision of alternative facilities when there is no accommodation for cyclists on a road. Better transit access also was a core concern - particularly on-board accommodation and bicycle parking at transit stations. An unexpected, but consistently cited concern, was the lack of marketing and informational materials about the region's existing bicycle facilities and lack of knowledge about how to ride safely. The plan attempts to address these core areas of concern.

### OVERALL PLAN GOAL

The goal of the plan is to ***ensure that bicycling is a convenient, safe, and practical means of transportation throughout the Bay Area for all Bay Area residents.***

Federal and state directives are placing greater emphasis on accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists when designing roadway facilities. Of particular note is Deputy Directive 64, issued by Caltrans earlier this year, which stipulates that bicyclists must be considered in all planning and project development activities. MTC's goal is to echo such directives and have them serve as a framework for the plan itself. For the region to make strides toward improving bicycle travel, however, this goal must be embraced by many different organizations, including cities, towns, counties, transit operators, the bicycling public, and other partner agencies of MTC.



## DEFINING THE REGIONAL BICYCLE NETWORK

The development of the Regional Bicycle Network is oriented around utilitarian bicycle trips, and emphasizes regional connectivity and connections to the transit system. Local routes may serve other purposes, and identifying the regional network does not imply that local bikeways are somehow demoted or will not be funded.

The recommended regional bikeways were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Provide connections to every incorporated town and city and to unincorporated areas with populations of over 5,000 people, and between this region and surrounding regions.
2. Provide connections to the regional transit system, including multimodal terminals, ferry terminals, BART stations, commuter rail stations, and Amtrak.
3. Provide connections to major activity centers such as universities, hospitals, parks, athletic venues, and shopping malls.
4. Provide access within or through the major central business districts of the region.
5. Comprise part of the existing, planned, or proposed Bay Trail system.

The Regional Bicycle Network is a subset of routes identified in the region's countywide bicycle plans. Maps of the proposed Regional Bikeway Network are shown on the pages to follow; specific project improvements to the regional bicycle network, that are also a subset of the countywide bicycle plans are listed in Appendix A of this report.

The regional bikeway network is defined by corridors, and exact alignments (street, path, or route) may not be determined or may change based on further study. Short routes that connect regional bikeways to transit stations are not shown on the maps due to the scale. However, these

routes and facilities are considered a part of the regional system.

### **COST AND REVENUES**

The long-term financial cost and projected funding to complete the regional bikeway system are important components of this plan. The cost estimates will require refinement over time.

The total cost to close gaps and improve the regional bikeway system in the Bay Area is estimated to be close to \$700 million (see Table 5.1). This reflects corridor projects only, and does not include the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge east span bikeway project. It also is important to note that, at this point, many regional projects are identified but cost estimates are not available (see Appendix A). The cost for full build-out will be higher.

MTC estimates that approximately \$577 million in funds are available over the next 25 years for bicycle projects in the Bay Area. Of this amount, \$463 million goes to cities and counties for local priority projects. The remaining \$114 million in regional discretionary funding estimated to be available for bicycle projects over the next 25 years is allocated in partnership with the county congestion management agencies and MTC.

### **REGIONAL BICYCLE NETWORK FUNDING APPROACH**

It is clear that there are insufficient funds to complete the countywide plans and proposed regional bicycle network. Based on the estimates above, there is a shortfall of approximately \$600 million dollars to complete the region's countywide plans; even if all the projected available local and regional funds for bicycle projects were used to complete the regional bicycle network, there would still be a \$96 million shortfall.

The question raised by Oversight Committee members and others is: Given that local and regional bicycle project priorities may differ, how much of the available funding should be directed toward the regional bike network? As mentioned previously, MTC has direct control over about \$114 million of

the projected \$577 million available to bicycle projects over the next 25 years, compared to the \$700 million cost to complete the regional bicycle network.

Some members of the public and the Oversight Committee are asking MTC to direct resources to projects contained in the Regional Bicycle Plan. Others prefer the bike plan to function as an information and coordination resource. Striking a balance between these interests, MTC has adopted a policy that regional discretionary funds allocated through the federal Surface Transportation Program/Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality improvement program (STP-CMAQ) for bicycle projects be used for those projects and programs that support the Regional Bicycle Network. These projects and programs will be selected by the congestion management agencies (CMA's). This option would not take effect until after a new Federal transportation funding bill is reauthorized in Fall of 2003, since all federal funds are programmed up to that time. The regional set-aside option can be re-visited when the RTP is updated in 2004 and the set-aside when it can be more fully weighed against other regional and county commitments.

There is another development that could help direct funds to bicycle projects and the Regional Bicycle Network. Assembly Constitutional Amendment 4 (Proposition 42), if passed in a statewide March 2002 vote, would permanently dedicate the sales tax on gasoline for designated transportation programs. Prop. 42 specifies that 40 percent of the funds go back to cities and counties to be spent on streets and roads repair, 20 percent be spent on mass transit and the remaining 40 percent be spent on projects funded through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). MTC estimates that about \$5.8 billion in new funding would be available to the Bay Area, with \$2.1 billion available for streets and roads repair, \$1.1 billion available for transit and \$2.6 billion available through the STIP.

The STIP fund augmentation provided by Prop. 42 would provide new funding that could be available to regional bike projects. About \$600 million of the \$2.6 billion projected to be available to the region are discretionary funds allocated by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for projects that serve interregional travel and would not be available for bike projects. The remaining \$2 billion is guaranteed to the counties by a formula based on local priorities. MTC will encourage counties to use local STIP funds to support the

Regional Bicycle Network, especially for projects that provide better connections to the region's public transit facilities.

It is important to point out that there is an unknown amount of highway funding spent on bicycle projects that are routinely incorporated into road improvement projects (e.g., road or overcrossing widenings that include bike lanes). MTC will continue to encourage the inclusion of bike facilities into road improvements as appropriate.

### **PROPOSED SUPPORT ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE BAY AREA BICYCLING CONDITIONS**

There are a number of ongoing programs recommended in this plan that would support bicycling safety and further bicycling planning efforts. MTC proposes to lead a Regional Bicycle Working Group to oversee activities described in this plan. These include:

- Data collection and analysis – routinely collect, analyze and disseminate user and accident data in the form of an annual “State of the Region” report.
- Enhancing the bicycle/transit connection – work with transit operators on bike parking and on-board bike storage issues, Identify station access issues and developing a “safe-routes-to-transit” program.
- Marketing and outreach--work with RIDES for Bay Area Commuters, the local rideshare matching agency, to promote Bike-to-Work Week activities. Efforts also could include:
  - Bike maps or Web-based trip planners
  - “Best practices” training programs for local agencies.

